

## **HEMI-SYNC® AS AN AUTOGENIC PROCESS RELATED TO THE GAME OF GOLF**

*by Laura Batchelor, MA*

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### **PURPOSE**

This study was designed to investigate the effects and preferred rate of application of Hemi-Sync as an autogenic, or self-regulatory, tool. The subjects in this study were men and women unfamiliar with autogenic exercises and who were interested in improving their performance in the game of golf.

### **THEORY**

It is the thesis of this study that as individuals improve control of their mental, emotional, and physical elements, through the process of manifesting progressively deeper levels of consciousness, there will appear within them an especial nature capable of improving the quality of their performance, the level of their enjoyment, and the rate of their learning.

### **REVIEW**

In the field of psychotherapy, it is generally understood that inner, subjective, frequently irrational realms of human experience are the most immediate and most interruptive factors in human performance. It is also generally understood that learning how to identify and overcome such interruptive thought, emotional, and physical responses is not easy. Most people in this culture are accustomed to being asked to look or listen closely to someone or something, but often are uncomfortable—even lost—when asked to imagine or feel something closely, especially when it is an emotion or a physical sensation.

The premise of this study is that this cultural blind spot is a primary reason many people often do not function well; they avoid feeling their bodily sensations clearly. To a great extent, excellence in any field is a result of how aware one is. Without self-interference, one is better able to function in the “awareness state.”

Everyone has experienced the awareness state at one time or another during moments of peak performance or experience. Alertness and perception are heightened, actions are

flawless, and life is simple and whole. Even in the most complicated and demanding situations the effort needed is clear, and actions flow in an uncanny but appropriate way.

Children, especially the very young, are immersed in the awareness state, blending and integrating with their play by using imagination. Often, as we grow older and become more educated, we trade our imaginations—our images—for words. Words and instructions from others and from our own minds replace imagination. The images remain within us, however we are no longer within the experience, within the state of awareness.

Learning how to overcome the thoughts, emotions, and physical activities that interfere with human performance is one of the most difficult tasks to perform in life. A key to reviving this natural state of awareness is relearning how to sense or feel things. In the natural state of awareness, we first receive images in our minds, images including sight, sound, taste, or smell, then we respond by translating the images into actions or words. Rich imagery is concurrent with bodily relaxation. Relaxation does not cause imagery, but it certainly provides the environment in which imagery functions at its fullest. The natural internal communication system of performance is imagery-based.

In the last decade, there has been significantly greater attention directed toward the relation between mind, body, and awareness, to tap hidden potential to heighten performance and experience. Learning how to become more aware—more conscious—of such things as tension, doubt, fear of failure, anxiety, and a limited image of performance, and then learning how to overcome them, are all at the heart of autogenic training. Autogenic training is a psychophysiologic form of psychotherapy that works with the body and mind simultaneously.

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effects and preferred rate of application of Hemi-Sync as an autogenic tool which focuses the whole brain-mind in a singular state of awareness. Most important to this study was the learning and re-creating, from memory and at will, those states of relaxation, synchronization, and visualization needed for the game of golf.

## **METHOD**

*Subjects:* The seven participants in the study, three females and four males from middle-class suburbs of St. Louis, were volunteers from a population of golfers at a local country club. Subjects' ages ranged from thirty-eight to fifty-six years and lengths of time as golfers ranged from fourteen months to fifteen years, with an average of seven years. Times per week playing golf ranged from two to five, with an average of three and one-half rounds per week.

*Data Collection:* Five measures were used:

1. Pre- and post-program eighteen-hole handicaps provided by the country club.

2. Each subject submitted three eighteen-hole-round scores (hole by hole) before and after the program.
3. The subjects completed a pre- and post-evaluation psychological symptoms checklist to describe the degree to which thoughts, emotions, and behaviors had bothered them during the last month. There were twelve thought questions, fourteen emotion questions, and twelve behavior questions.
4. Each subject kept a journal of his/her sessions to record the date and time of the session, what s/he thought about the session, how s/he felt during the session, and any post-session activity s/he would like to log, i.e., thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and visualizations.
5. Each subject completed a post-program questionnaire and a written evaluation of the program.

*Procedure:* An introductory meeting to introduce the subjects formally to the program, and to collect the preprogram data was held.

Each subject was given four Hemi-Sync cassette tapes: *The Way of Hemi-Sync*, *Energy Walk*, H-PLUS® *Synchronizing*, and *Under Par Golf*. Also provided were a stereo cassette player with headphones and batteries, a study requirement sheet, a written explanation of the golf program, a tape regimen sheet, a "Hemi-Sync Tape Taking Techniques" pamphlet, reprints of pages two and three of The Monroe Institute® catalog describing FFR and Hemi-Sync, and a note pad to record responses. Subjects were instructed to follow the regimen of tapes, including a minimum of two sessions per week.

During the program, subjects met intermittently on the golf course to discuss their experiences with the tapes. Subsequently, a post-program meeting was held for debriefing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The measuring instruments used provided a starting point, or base, on which to expand the use of the above theories and program. Any further research would require that data collection procedures be more carefully developed. The data collected in this study and any interpretations made do not necessarily reflect a true representative sample of the population, only the particular results and responses of the individuals involved. The hypothesis presented has not been tested in accordance with accepted formal scientific procedures. The results found do have a particular educational significance and I encourage further research in this area.

While the golfers learned to exercise and strengthen outer, physical aspects of their performance, they also learned to consider the internal, nonphysical aspects of motivation, self-control, and self-interference. The cooperative manner in which the men and women volunteered for this program suggested to me that the average sportsperson may be hungrily

seeking education in self-improvement. While six of the subjects openly expressed a desire and need to improve their games, one stated that he wanted to participate in the program for what he felt it could bring to his everyday life.

Before the program, none of the subjects had used a Hemi-Sync autogenic tool. The use of visualization was known to six of the subjects. One subject had previous experience of visualization in a group setting only. None of the subjects were familiar with autogenic exercises.

During the introductory meeting, two of the subjects openly expressed skepticism toward the efficacy of the program and discounted any hope of immediate effectiveness. A common question among the group was, "Are these tapes the same as subliminals?" My response was that the tapes do not contain subliminals, rather, low audibles of blended and sequenced sound patterns. My assessment of the group was that, generally, they were unfamiliar with states of consciousness other than a usual ego or sleeping states. Therefore, I used terms such as "being in the zone" and "on target" to describe other states related to performance that they may have experienced at one time or another.

All seven subjects who began the program completed at least the minimum eight-tape session requirement. Three exceeded the requirement, two having completed eleven sessions and one having completed eighteen. Although one subject recorded twelve sessions, three of those were not fully completed due to distracting noises, thoughts, and emotions. The three subjects completing the most sessions reported the greatest effects. The subjects who completed eleven sessions both showed a thirty-nine-percent change on the psychological symptom score and the subject who completed eighteen sessions showed a forty-eight-percent change. These percentage changes reflect point reductions in all three categories—thought, emotion, and behavior—indicating a lessening of self-interference. Of the two subjects completing eleven sessions and showing a thirty-nine-percent change, one lowered his handicap by one point and the other by two points. The subject completing eighteen sessions and showing a forty-eight-percent change raised her handicap by one point.

To assess subjectively the various depths of consciousness the subjects seemed able to achieve, I looked to their journal entries. Using certain nomenclature from The Monroe Institute which can be related to the use of Hemi-Sync exercises: Focus 3 is a state of profound relaxation; Focus 10 is a state of mind awake/body asleep; and Focus 12 is a state of conscious awareness expanded beyond the physical body.

It appears that the two subjects completing eleven sessions learned to achieve a Focus 10 state during the tape exercises, while the subject completing eighteen sessions learned to achieve a Focus 12 state. One subject who completed nine sessions showed a reduction on

the psychological symptom scores of seven percent while her handicap remained the same. Analysis of her journal suggested that she was able to achieve a Focus 3 state.

The three remaining subjects fulfilled the prescribed minimum of eight tape sessions. Of these three, one subject lowered her handicap two points and decreased her psychological symptom score by thirty-three percent, another subject lowered his handicap one point and decreased his psychological symptom score by sixteen percent, and the third subject lowered his handicap one point and showed no percentage change. Journal analysis indicates that all three learned to achieve, at most, a conscious Focus 3 state.

Of the four means of collecting data—handicaps, hole-by-hole scores, written evaluations/journals, and psychological symptom scores—I found the hole-by-hole and handicap scores to be the least reliable in terms of revealing any direct effects of the autogenic tool. The accumulation of play throughout the season alone could have affected the changes.

However, it is interesting that the greatest period of change for each subject occurred during and directly after the program.

While the subjects looked primarily to the handicap reports as a measure of change, I focused mainly on the psychological symptom scores, the subjects' post-program evaluations, and their journals. Of these tools, I found the psychological symptom test to be uniquely reflective of and specific to the areas of change. The journals were far more revealing than I had expected. Each of the subjects, in his/her own way, indicated a specific level of investment and particular type of response to the program. The hole-by-hole scores were of limited value except to show that three pre- and post-program rounds were played. However, each subject's unparred holes were of interest, as the post-program scores on these unparred holes did reflect improvement in each player's most difficult area of play. For instance, the hole-by-hole scores of the subject whose handicap remained the same indicate that her hole-by-hole play improved. Her score cards showed consistent play at the par and bogey level for longer periods of time, only to "blow up" on one hole on the front and back nine, thus keeping her score at the usual handicap level. Could it be that the two blow-up holes, which had the effect of maintaining her handicap at the same level, were the result of an unconscious fear of success?

## **FACTORS HANDICAPPING THE PROGRAM**

As a result of administering this study and from my review of sports awareness skills literature, I have come to understand that the average sportsperson lacks knowledge of how tension, stress, fear of failure, and low self-esteem can be an interference to the performance of a game. The subject of self-interference was not reviewed with the subjects in any formal, detailed manner before the program. I believe the absence of such an in-depth briefing is the factor which most limited the subjects' full understanding and acceptance of the program.

The subjects openly and excitedly expressed an interest in the Hemi-Sync exercises used in the program. During the *Energy Walk* visualization exercise, many of the more “rational types,” when hearing the voice on the tape asking them to “get up,” actually tried to rise from where they were lying at the time, an indication of how much literalization is ingrained within our culture.

Although *The Way of Hemi-Sync* was rated one of the least-preferred tapes, the subjects felt it was necessary as an introduction to the unique sound technology. H-PLUS *Synchronizing* was the most popular and effective. Subjects recommended that the PREP exercise (side one of *Synchronizing*) be used before *Energy Walk*. Some of the subjects stated that they were disappointed that the *Under Par Golf* tape was placed so late in the program, and that it was a bit flat compared to the other tapes.

It was my impression from the post-program meeting that the subjects were somewhat frustrated with the number of encodings, or verbal cues, introduced on the tapes which they were asked to learn. The “Fore” encoding on the *Under Par Golf* tape was used most often, while other encodings were used sometimes or not at all.

The greatest liability to the program was the sequence of tapes in the regimen and the suggested minimum of two sessions a week. As an improvement, I would suggest that a six-step regimen be used and that each subject do no less than three sessions per week, thereby completing the regimen within two weeks so that it can be repeated within the one-month time frame.

## CONCLUSIONS

From a review of the results of this study, clearly effectiveness would be improved through implementing specific changes in the sequence of tapes and the rate of application. The use of Hemi-Sync tapes, when applied in a structured regimen, can improve the quality of a player’s performance while enhancing his/her enjoyment of the game. In addition, the use of this regimen, while directed specifically to golf improvement/enhancement, has an impact on the player’s life off the course. By directing attention toward the relationship between mind, body, and awareness, hidden potential can be tapped to heighten experience and strength in performance.

*[Ed: Based on the positive results he achieved as a subject in the study, and on the subsequent improvements made to the program, one participant has developed a commercially available package for golfers. SportSync™-Golf is designed to improve the mind-body coordination required for playing the game of golf, improve performance on the golf course, and tap the inner functions fundamental to the game. A four-cassette album of Hemi-Sync exercises and an instruction booklet are included. For more information, write to SportSync, Inc., P.O. Box 6106, Chesterfield, MO 63006]*

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